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# WHOLE ISSUE *Nebraska Bird Review* (Apr 1958) 26(2)

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# The Nebraska Bird Review

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## YELLOW WARBLERS AT THE NEST

*Reported by Mrs. Roy Witschy*

A nest was discovered June 1, 1957, in a tree-like hedge close to the porch. It was just shoulder high. The nest was firmly woven, deep like a cup, and was two inches in diameter. When it was first discovered, it was just a hull. It was almost completed but not lined. On June 1, Mrs. Jessie Acker, discoverer of the nest, put small pieces of new white cotton in branches two feet from the nest. The female warbler began immediately to gather the cotton and line her nest.

June 2-3 the birds worked all day lining the nest with the cotton and when it was gone Mrs. Acker put out more.

June 4-5 a network of fine grass was placed over the cotton lining in the nest. This grass looked like coarse hair from a horse's tail.

June 6 the first tiny blue-white egg speckled liberally with brown was laid.

June 7-10 an egg was laid each day. The total was five eggs. The female sat on the nest almost constantly. Mrs. Acker could pass within two feet of the nest without the female's leaving.

June 21 at 2:00 P.M. there were no young birds.

June 22 at noon there were four tiny naked birds out of their shells. The nest was clean and there were no shells near the nest. About once every minute the female stood up in the nest and worked with the young. The male started coming and bringing food, first a small green "worm" which he fed to the female and later a small dark insect which the female seemed to feed to a young bird. The

male always announced his arrival by singing in a tree nearby.

June 23 the birds were observed constantly from 12:50 until 1:50 P.M. with the following results:

12:51 the male announced his arrival with a warble and the female left the nest. The male fed the young and left.

12:56 the female fed the young and set on the nest.

12:58 the male fed the young and the female left.

1:01 the male fed the young. The female was still absent.

1:06 the male fed again.

1:09 the female fed the birds and stayed on the nest.

1:12 the male fed and the female left.

1:18 the female fed the young and then worked with them, standing in the nest and using a scratching motion very nervously for about two minutes, then she settled to a quiet position on the nest.

1:29 the male gave a short warble, then lit in branches near the nest. The female left. The male hopped to the edge of the nest and fed green "worms" to the young, then left.

1:35 the male fed.

1:36 the female may have fed and then she stayed on the nest.

1:47 the male warbled and the female left.

1:48 the female returned and fed. This made 12 feedings in 60 minutes.

1:49 the male came and fed a large "worm" to the female and

left. The female remained quietly on the nest.

All the while the female was incubating the male did not show himself, but as soon as the eggs hatched he was very faithful coming constantly to feed the young or his mate, but he never once attempted to brood. He just stood on the edge, quickly fed the young, and left. The female usually rearranged the birds before brooding. It looked as though she moved them to keep from getting some mashed in the bottom of the nest.

June 23 the young started to feather out.

June 24 the weather was warm and the female did not brood but sat on the edge of the nest. Heads of the young could be seen above the nest during feeding.

June 25 the birds were checked from 7:30 until 8:30 A.M., but the young were sleeping. They did not open their mouths when disturbed but only when hungry. The male called to his mate three times from a nearby tree. The female flew to the nest four times in the hour, sat on the edge of the nest quietly for a few seconds, and then left to sit in a nearby tree.

The warblers appeared to get green "worms" about a half to three-quarters of an inch long from cottonwood and elm trees. They flew from the nest to the trees and directly back to the nest.

June 25 from 12:45 until 3:00 the interval of time between feedings was about nine minutes with variance from one to 26 minutes. The parents fed an equal number of times, 14 in all. From 3:00 until 5:00 there was little activity. The female made a trip every five to 10 minutes to

inspect the young, then left. The male came twice. At 5:15 the male fed again and at 6:30 they were still feeding.

June 26 there was little activity from 7:30 until 9:30 A.M. The young seemed to be sleeping and the female checked on them occasionally. At 11:00 A.M. feeding began. By 12:58 they had fed 20 times with an average interval of about 5.5 minutes. Extremes were one to 25 minutes. Feeding was equal between the parents.

The feeding routine seemed to start very early in the morning. The birds were sleeping by 7:00 A.M. The noon feeding continued from about 11:30 until about 2:00. Evening feeding was from about 5:00 until nearly dark. It was 7:00 on June 26.

June 30 when Mrs. Acker came out on the porch at 7:00 A.M. all the young birds left the nest. Two of them were located and placed back in the nest, but after they rested about five minutes, they fluttered up into the tree branches where they remained for some time. Both the male and the female called often. At 7:30 A.M. the female ignored the birds in the branches and made frequent trips to the nest and carried away waste. There was an unhatched egg remaining.

A young bird was found in a bush nearby. It was all gray no yellow. He hopped among the branches and the female hopped around in the same bush.

The female was seen to feed a young one at 1:45 P.M., but none were seen after that time.

Mr. Witschy took movies on June 25, 27, and 28.—*Scottsbluff*

## 1957 NESTING REPORT

Compiled by M. L. and C. G. Pritchard

This is the second nesting report. There is still a lack of uniformity among the reports, so we shall again summarize the information. Areas one through five refer to the same areas as shown on the map last year (*The Nebraska Bird Review* XXV (2), page 20). Twenty-four reports were submitted to the Editor. Eighteen counties were represented, again a fairly good sample except that there were no reports from Area 3. Reporters were as follows:

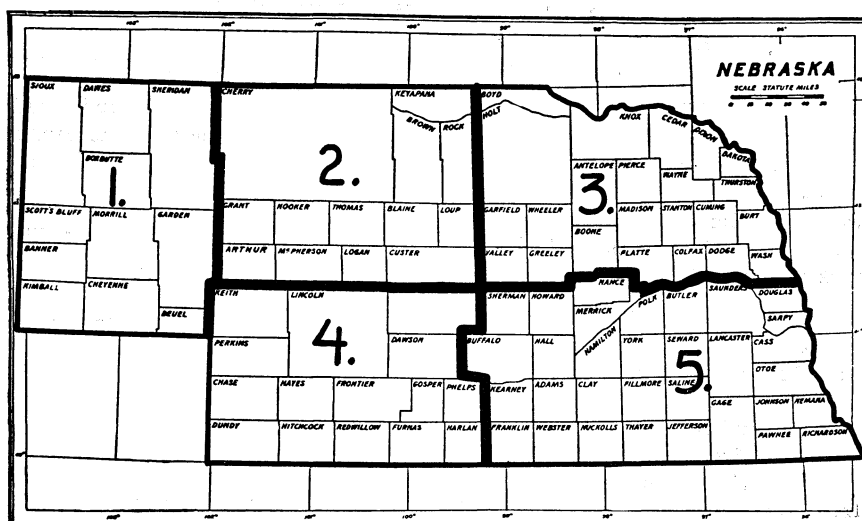
Area 1. Frank Anderson, Gering; Mrs. Jack Brashear, Scottsbluff; Miss Doris Gates, Chadron; Mr. and Mrs. J. Mathisen, Alliance; Mrs. Roy J. Witschy, Scottsbluff.

Area 2. Mrs. Ruth Kroeger, Custer; Earl Glandon, Stapleton; Mrs. Don Held, Elsmere; County.

Area 4. The late Mrs. Harry B. Allen, Cozad; Mrs. Edna Bottrell, Beaver City; Mrs. Minnie Condra, Bertrand; Mrs. Morris Cox, Hershey; C. W. (Bill) Huntley, Keith County.

Area 5. Audubon Naturalists' Club, Lincoln; John C. W. Bliese, Kearney; Brooking Bird Club, Hastings; Rushton G. Cortelyou, Omaha; Mrs. Chris. Hansen, Kearney; Miss Carrie Ludden, Kearney; Mrs. Marie Munk, Kearney County; Mrs. Salchow, Kearney; Carl H. Swanson, Omaha; Harold Turner, Bladen.

State-wide records accumulated by the Nebraska Game, Forestation and Parks Commission for game species.



*1957 Nesting Report:* Ninety-seven species were reported nesting in Nebraska. After each species is listed the area (or areas) from which it was reported. Eared Grebe (1, 2), Double-crested Cormorant (1), Great Blue Heron (1), Green Heron (5), Black-crowned Night Heron (1, 4), Mallard (all), American Pintail (1, 2), Green-winged Teal (2), Blue-winged Teal (all), Gadwall (2), American Widgeon (2), Redhead (1, 2), Lesser Scaup (2), Ruddy Duck (1, 5), Red-tailed Hawk (5), Ferruginous Hawk (5), Prairie Chicken (2, 3, 4, 5), Sharp-tailed Grouse (1, 2, 3), Hungarian Partridge (2, 3), Bob-white (all), Pheasant (all), Sora (5), Coot (2, 5), Killdeer (1, 2, 4, 5), Long-billed Curlew (2), Spotted Sandpiper (2, 4), Avocet (1), Black Tern (5), Mourning Dove (1, 2, 4, 5), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (5), Black-billed Cuckoo (5), Horned Owl (1, 4, 5), Long-eared Owl (2), Common Nighthawk (1), Chimney Swift (5), Northern Flicker (4, 5), Red-shafted Flicker (1), Red-bellied Woodpecker (5), Red-headed Woodpecker (1, 4, 5), Hairy Woodpecker (2, 5), Downy Woodpecker (4, 5), Eastern Kingbird (2, 4, 5), Western Kingbird (1, 2, 4, 5), Great Crested Flycatcher (5), Eastern Phoebe (1, 5), Say's Phoebe (1, 4, 5), Horned Lark (2, 5), Bank Swallow (5), Rough-winged Swallow (2, 4), Barn Swallow (1, 2, 4, 5), Northern Cliff Swallow (1, 4), Purple Martin (4, 5), Blue Jay (2, 4, 5), Black-billed Magpie (1, 2, 5), Crow (1, 2, 4), Black-capped Chickadee (1, 5), Tufted Titmouse (5), White-breasted Nuthatch (5), Western House Wren (1, 2, 4, 5), Rock Wren (1, 4), Catbird (5), Brown Thrasher (1, 2, 4, 5), Robin (1, 2, 4, 5), Eastern Bluebird (5), "Shrike" (2), Loggerhead Shrike (5), Starling (1, 4, 5),

Bell's Vireo (5), Warbling Vireo (5), Yellow Warbler (5), Ovenbird (1), American Redstart (1), House Sparrow (1, 4, 5), Bobolink (4, 5), Eastern Meadowlark (5), Western Meadowlark (2, 5), Yellow-headed Blackbird (5), Red-wing (1, 2, 4, 5), Orchard Oriole (1, 2, 4, 5), Baltimore Oriole (2, 4, 5), Bullock's Oriole (1), Brewer's Blackbird (1), Common Grackle (1, 4, 5), Brown-headed Cowbird (1, 4, 5), Cardinal (5), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (5), Black-headed Grosbeak (1, 5), Western Blue Grosbeak (2, 4, 5), Dickcissel (5), Common House Finch (1), Northern Pine Siskin (2), Goldfinch (5), Rufous-sided Towhee (1), Lark Bunting (2, 5), Western Grasshopper Sparrow (5), Vesper Sparrow (2), Lark Sparrow (1, 2, 4, 5), Chipping Sparrow (1, 2). These same species were sometimes reported present in areas other than those in which they were reported nesting. It can be noted that we now have evidence of nesting for 24 species that were not on the 1956 list, although 15 of these species were reported as present. Seventeen species were not repeated in 1957, although 10 of these species were listed as present.

Thirty-seven species were reported present (but not nesting) in one or more areas. These are: White Pelican, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, American Bittern, Shoveller, Western Turkey Vulture, Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Golden Eagle, Marsh Hawk, Eastern Sparrow Hawk, Upland Plover, Franklin's Gull, Forster's Tern, Screech Owl, Burrowing Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Wood Pewee, Western Wood Pewee, Violetgreen Swallow, Pinon Jay, Redbreasted Nuthatch, Mockingbird, Sage Thrasher, Wood Thrush, Mountain Bluebird, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Shrike, Red-eyed Vireo.

Black and White Warbler, Audubon's Warbler, Yellow-throat, Chat, Western Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Lazuli Bunting, Red Crossbill, and White-crowned Sparrow.

The reporters are to be commended. Many took the time to find the nest in use, and all included the evidence of nesting with additional remarks

where necessary. Where there are more than one species sharing a common name (such as meadowlark, cuckoo, towhee, shrike, yellow-legs), it is worthwhile to determine which species is being reported. In most instances it would not take a great deal more time.

Let's have more reports in 1958!

## A STUDY OF BIRD HABITATS IN ALLIANCE CITY PARK

It is a well established law of zoology that every species requires a certain type of cover for survival. This cover, providing food, water, and a hiding place, composes the animal's habitat. As all orihologists realize, it is sometimes necessary to investigate very specific habitats to observe certain species. For instance, Kirtland's Warblers breed only in the second growth jack pine forests of central Michigan. Survival of this particular species, and many others, depends on the condition of the habitat. Man can either improve or destroy it thus affecting the numbers and even the existance of some species.

Bird students can learn much about the habitat requirements of different species by careful study and observation. This article concerns a rather cursory study of bird habitats in the Alliance City Park. The information presented here may induce others to make similar observations. If members of N.O.U. could bring together information on bird habitats as they do on bird migration, perhaps our organization could contribute something of value in the field of avian ecology.

This study began in the spring of 1956 and was terminated after the spring of 1957. Observations were made every few days during the migration periods, occasionally in the summer, and seldom in winter. Notes were taken on species present, their abundance, activities, and the type of habitat they seemed to prefer. We found the Alliance City Park to be a virtual ornithologists paradise during the spring and fall migrations. From approximately 65 walks through the park we identified 68 species. The accompanying list indicates the species identified and the seasons they were present.

The city park apparently satisfies the habitat requirements of a great variety of birds due to the diversity of cover types found there. The park is divided into four separate blocks. Two of these blocks offer little for birds due to the presence of a band shell and tennis courts. A few large cottonwood trees attracted Red-headed Woodpeckers and Starlings. Starlings seemed to be more abundant in the winter, especially during inclement weather.

In the other two blocks a variety of exotic and native trees and

shrubs, gardens, ponds and a drainage ditch supporting cattails and other aquatic vegetation provide diverse food and cover conditions. Seven general habitats exist in the Alliance City Park:

1. Tall deciduous trees predominantly cottonwoods, Chinese elm and hackberry.
2. Shrubs and lower portions of deciduous trees.
3. Coniferous trees, mostly Scotch pine and cedar.
4. Marsh, supporting cattails and smartweeds.
5. Open water.
6. Lawn, including weeds.
7. Bare soil and gardens.

We have attempted to associate the habitats listed above with the various species of birds observed. Several species were seen flying over the park rather than actually occupying it. These were: Snow Geese, Blue Geese, Sparrow Hawks, Killdeers, Long-billed Curlews, Franklin's Gulls, Chimney Swifts, and Common Night-hawk.

The only shore birds observed during the study period were the Spotted Sandpiper and the Solitary Sandpiper feeding along the muddy banks of the pond. The pond also attracted a Belted Kingfisher in the fall of 1956.

Scotch pines scattered throughout the park attracted many warblers but primarily the Myrtle Warbler. The loose, flakey bark may harbor many forms of insect life providing subsistence for the insectivorous migrants. An Evening Grosbeak was noted on several occasions feeding beneath the pines.

Larger deciduous trees provided cover for a great number of migrants and residents. It was in the hackberry trees that we discovered one of the most interesting and un-

expected species. Three Broad-winged Hawks, some what of a rarity in Western Nebraska, stayed in these trees for several days in the spring of 1956.

Limbs of the cottonwoods and Chinese elms provided perches for the aerial insectivores such as flycatchers including Western and Eastern Kingbirds. A point of vantage is a rather important item for these birds in their habitat. Warblers, Bullock's Orioles, Mourning Doves and a great variety of other species were commonly observed in the higher trees.

Just as the larger trees supported a characteristic avifauna, so did the shrubs. Birds that seemed to prefer the bushes included: Brown Thrasher, Catbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, and others. The fall fruits of ornamental shrubs were attractive especially to Cedar Waxwings and Myrtle Warblers, but Cedar Waxwings seemed to prefer the tall deciduous trees for roosting. Yellow Warblers were most frequently found in the bushes. At least one male was heard singing its characteristic breeding song but we didn't locate a nest.

Robins, Swainson's (Olive-backed) Thrushes and Gray-cheeked Thrushes seemed to be equally at home in trees, shrubs, or on the ground.

The smaller pond surrounded by low-growing willows almost always yielded a Northern Water-thrush and Yellow Throat during the periods they were present in the park. These birds are typically associated with an aquatic habitat and dense vegetation.

The drainage ditch connecting the two ponds also seemed to form a specific habitat for certain species. The bushes and low deciduous trees



bordering the ditch attracted Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Townsend's Solitaire, Myrtle Warblers, Black-poll Warblers, Yellow Warblers, Pileolated Warblers and Northern Water-thrushes in season.

A somewhat artificial situation was created along the edge of the larger duck pond by the scattering of grain for the captive waterfowl. Mourning Doves, Common Grackles, House Sparrows and White-crowned Sparrows were almost always present, and Harris's Sparrows and Black-headed Grosbeaks were also attracted by the grain.

Dandelions that had gone to seed were fed upon by Red Crossbills, Pine Siskins, and American Goldfinches. Other fringillids commonly

found feeding on the ground and lawn were Lark Sparrows, Clay-colored Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, Lincoln's Sparrows and Oregon Juncos.

Even the bare soil plowed for gardening served a function in bird habitats. In the spring of 1957, several Poor-wills were noted in the park. These unusual birds invariably alighted on the bare soil, their protective coloration making observation almost an impossibility until they were flushed. House Sparrows and no doubt other birds used the dry soil for dust baths.

This brief study indicates that many species of birds are associated with certain types of vegetation in the Alliance City Park.—*John and Ann Mathisen, Alliance*

#### Birds Observed in the Alliance City Park — 1956-57

Species	Spring 1956	Summer 1956	Fall 1956	Winter 1956-57	Spring 1957	Nest or Young
1. Snow Goose					x	
2. Blue Goose					x	
3. Broad-winged Hawk	x					
4. Sparrow Hawk	x					
5. Killdeer		x			x	
6. Long-billed Curlew					x	
7. Spotted Sandpiper	x					
8. Solitary Sandpiper	x		x			
9. Franklin's Gull					x	
10. Mourning Dove	x	x	x		x	x
11. Poor-will					x	
12. Common Nighthawk		x	x			
13. Chimney Swift		x				
14. Belted Kingfisher			x			
15. Red-shafted Flicker			x		x	
16. Red-headed Woodpecker		x				
17. Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker					x	
18. Downy Woodpecker			x			
19. Eastern Kingbird		x	x		x	
20. Western Kingbird	x	x			x	x
21. Empidonax Flycatcher	x		x		x	
22. Blue Jay	x	x	x		x	
23. House Wren	x				x	
24. Catbird	x	x	x		x	

25. Brown Thrasher	x		x			
26. Robin	x	x	x		x	x
27. Swainson's Thrush	x				x	
28. Gray-Cheeked Thrush	x				x	
29. Veery	x					
30. Townsend's Solitaire			x		x	
31. Golden-crowned Kinglet				x	x	
32. Ruby-crowned Kinglet			x			
33. Cedar Waxwing			x			
34. Starling	x			x	x	
35. Red-Eyed Vireo	x		x			
36. Warbling Vireo	x				x	
37. Black and White Warbler			x			
38. Orange-crowned Warbler	x				x	
39. Yellow Warbler	x	x			x	
40. Magnolia Warbler			x			
41. Myrtle Warbler	x		x		x	
42. Audubon's Warbler			x			
43. Black-poll Warbler	x				x	
44. Northern Water Thrush	x				x	
45. Yellow-Throat	x		x		x	
46. Yellow-Breasted Chat	x		x		x	
47. Wilson's Warbler			x			
48. American Redstart	x		x		x	
49. House Sparrow	x	x	x	x	x	x
50. Red-winged Blackbird	x		x		x	
51. Orchard Oriole	x				x	
52. Baltimore Oriole					x	
53. Bullock's Oriole	x					
54. Common Grackle	x	x	x		x	x
55. Western Tanager	x				x	
56. Black-headed Grosbeak			x		x	
57. Evening Grosbeak	x					
58. Pine Siskin	x				x	
59. American Goldfinch	x		x		x	
60. Red Grossbill	x					
61. Rufous-sided Towhee	x		x		x	
62. Lark Sparrow	x					
63. Oregon Junco			x	x		
64. Chipping Sparrow	x					
65. Clay-Colored Sparrow	x		x		x	
66. Harris's Sparrow	x				x	
67. Gambel's Sparrow	x		x		x	
68. Lincoln's Sparrow	x				x	

Note: Seasons are based on the following months:

Winter — December 1 to February 28

Spring — March 1 to May 30

Summer — June 1 to August 31

Fall — September 1 to November 30

## GENERAL NOTES

Answers to the query, "What bird do you consider the sign of spring?"

"I'll choose the Brown Thrasher. Not many of these birds winter in Nebraska and when one morning in early April you hear an exuberant rhapsody of bird delight and see on the tip top branch of a nearby tree a Brown Thrasher almost splitting his throat, you know spring is here."—Lucius H. Watson, Lincoln

"Mrs. Smith and I both have decided on the Thrasher for the sign of spring. Formerly we would have said the Robin but we have had 12 Robins at one time in the yard this winter, taking baths at the bird pool." —Bertha Krohn, Lincoln

"Best sign of spring? Why, the Western Meadowlark singing from a fence post as if his heart would burst! He's a different creature from the poor hunched-up relative who has been hugging the ground all winter."—Vera Maunder, Hastings

"In our section of the country I would say that the Red-winged Blackbird is a sure sign that spring is coming. I usually spot the first ones in the last week of February and by the end of the first week of March they are everywhere. Here, if we look along the Platte, we always find flocks of Robins; and Bluebirds, too, stay over winter wherever there is open water. The largest winter flock I've seen is 23." —Mrs. Kermit S. Swanson, Aurora

"When the woodpeckers begin drumming incessantly on the courting tree and I hear the first Field Sparrow piping his little song—it's spring."—Mrs. Paul Heineman, Plattsmouth

"I'll place my bet on the common old 'turtle' dove as a sure sign of spring."—Pam Millnitz, Plainview

"When I see the Bluebird, I will think that spring is here."—Mrs. A. M. Jones, Hastings

"I consider our Meadowlark the best sign of spring here. We always have some Robins along the river every winter, but I have never seen Meadowlarks here in the middle of winter. We may see one or two on a warm day the last of February or the first week of March."—Mrs. E. C. Logan, Springview

"This wouldn't be a good criterion for the whole state, but the first time I hear (Sandhill) Cranes talking to each other overhead and I go spilling out the door to look for them, my heart leaps with the sensation that spring IS on the way. I really can't think of anything else that gives me such a definite sensation of a TIME."—Mrs. Gail Shickley, North Platte

"John votes for the Avocet and I for the 'chuckaree' call of the Red-winged Blackbird."—Mrs. Ann Mathisen, Alliance

"As most ornithologists, amateur or otherwise, know the presence of Robins is not a sign of spring or anything else except that they are finding feed in the vicinity. I am inclined to believe that no bird is a sign of spring but that spring is a sign of birds. If I were to pick a bird as a sign of spring, it would be the Pintail; or if a land bird is preferred, it would be the Killdeer." —Earl Glandon, Stapleton

DAWSON COUNTY.—This was my approach to the matter of bird feeding. November 30: Mrs. Sheldon was in and we talked of bird feeding which she does quite successfully. I told her that I didn't think there were any birds around this part of

town and besides she and Mrs. Wisda were feeding most of the birds in town. She thought there was a nuthatch or two left over so I decided to try it, mostly to prove that there were none.

December 5: I fastened suet to four trees—three in the front yard and two in the back. It was nearly dark and I was cold.

December 6: At noon a Chickadee was bouncing from tree to tree, locating and sampling each piece, perhaps the most wildly excited bird I've seen for some time.

December 7: The three House Sparrows and the two Starlings that live in the back yard were busily demolishing the pieces there while a female Red-breasted Nuthatch appeared in the front yard with the single purpose of carrying away that piece of suet just as fast as she could. The Chickadee came and went frequently. At least I assumed there was but one.

December 8: There are two nuthatches now. A male has joined the first one in carrying away suet. Considering the speed with which the food disappears, I am thankful that these birds are not any larger. A Brown Creeper came to look the situation over and approved. The juncos and a Robin apparently heard about food and came to see if there was any for them. There wasn't. I had no idea that the demand was so great. So I took hammer, nails and wood and made a large feeding tray for the east window where it is sheltered and near the bird bath. A flowering dogwood gives parking space.

December 9: Apparently no one has told these birds that they are supposed to be shy, timid little creatures. When I went out the back

door, Chickadees called and continued eating, the nuthatch flew ten feet away and fussed impatiently, the Brown Creeper moved to the other side of the tree and three Starlings stood their ground and glared at me until I went inside and then returned to devouring a quarter pound of suet.

December 10: From the original two Starlings I now have ten to twelve sunning themselves on the eaves, bathing but mostly eating, eating, eating. The three House Sparrows have become six and the Downy Woodpecker quietly showed up for the first time. The Golden-crowned Kinglets and Pine Siskins apparently stay in the tree tops but find the atmosphere below congenial. I put out the last piece of suet this noon. If the birds will eat a pound the first week, what will they be doing by spring? And how many will I be feeding? The prospects of the future frighten me. I keep thinking of the friend in Vermont who feeds three hundred pounds of sunflower seed a winter to the hordes of Evening Grosbeaks. If a grosbeak shows his fat face in my back yard, the restaurant closes forthwith. No transients, please.

December 11: The creeper, nuthatches, chickadees et al have decided that suet is one of their rights in life and it had better be there, too. I apologize to Mrs. Sheldon. I was so wrong in thinking there were few birds in the vicinity. There are at least 15 Starlings and we have begun the second pound of suet, the peanutbutter jar is getting low and the grocery bill is going up. There have been ten species and about 35 individuals, and the second week hasn't even begun.—*Carol Kinch, Lexington*

PRAIRIE CHICKENS IN EASTERN NEBRASKA.—A mounted game bird deserving special recognition came to light recently when I opened a crate of mounted birds stored in the attic of our home. The specimen, a male Prairie Chicken, was taken February 10, 1937, near the mouth of the Elkhorn River as it empties into the Platte River in Sarpy County, Nebraska. The specimen was mounted by me. Joseph Moline and Edward Janousek of Omaha report that a large flock of these birds were seen several seasons and were first noticed about 1934. They reported the flock was frequently seen by neighboring farmers and seemed to disappear for no apparent reason. This flock of Prairie Chickens were evidently migrants. Elmer Gillespie of Gretna shot a Prairie Chicken about this time near Valley, Douglas County. This specimen was mounted and is now in the collection of a man living in Murray, Nebraska.—*Ralph Velich, Omaha*

DAKOTA COUNTY SPRING NOTES.—Since I was doing most of my birding in Iowa and South Dakota during mid-May, 1957, I let the Nebraska trip go to the last, hoping to find resident Blue Grosbeaks and Yellow-throated Vireos, but I missed both species. However, I found a few interesting species and will report on these. The Turkey Vultures were back on the Homer hills. Along the bottom of the bluffs I was fortunate to see Olive-sided Flycatchers twice during the day. The warblers were fast thinning out and I was pleased to still find the Tennessee, Yellow, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Black-poll, Mourning Warblers, Chat, and the Redstart. I again ran across that puzzling heavy flight of mixed flocks of several hundred Chipping and Clay-colored

Sparrows. The first Chipping Sparrows usually show in early April with the first Clay-colors in late April, but here were hundreds of both still leisurely migrating in late May. Most of all the birds seen were feeding on the canker worms which had already denuded many trees and which will no doubt kill many trees. My most interesting record for the trip was the finding of a lone Lincoln Sparrow, which by being found on May 23 topped all my existing thirty-one years of late spring departure records for this species. —*Wm. Youngworth, Sioux City, Iowa*

CHERRY COUNTY.—In early June (1957) we found the nest of a pair of Long-eared Owls in a red cedar. The three young were about eight inches tall and covered with the softest, white down. The brilliance of their yellow eyes was startling and the shiny beaks and small talons looked very business-like. Two days later we found two of the young perching in near-by cedars while one remained in the nest. Their coloring was changing to a grayish brown and with each visit we found them a little more difficult to locate. Later, the owls brought their young to the trees about the yard and this caused much early morning commotion among the orioles and kingbirds. We believe they left our locality in late August.

A pair of Brown Thrashers nested on the ground at the foot of a small cottonwood where it was slightly sheltered by sprouts. Four young were fledged.

Among the usual number of Blue Jays last summer was one that gave a cry similar to the call of a hawk. We noticed the sound mostly in the afternoon and it was some time be-

fore we discovered that it was being made by a Blue Jay.

Due to the heavy crop of cedar berries we have hundreds of Robins and small troops of Waxwings, usually 10 to 30 birds.—*Mrs. Donald Held, Elsmere*

## EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS

"Purple Finches seem to be unusually common in our Omaha territory this fall and winter (dated December 27, 1957). A Brown Thrasher, Carolina Wrens, Harris's Sparrows, and Whitethroated Sparrows have been observed in our Fontenelle Forest by (R. G.) Cortelyou and (Carl) Swanson. Mr. Cortelyou also observed the Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks and Horned Owls there. He saw a Winter Wren in Elmwood Park. Mr. and Mrs. John W. Bates recently observed six Coturnix Quail using their bird bath. They live on a farm near Irvington.

"Recent bird observation in Omaha (date January 27, 1958) included the normally rare Bohemian Waxwings by O. L. Stoltenberg and White-winged Crossbills at Forest Lawn Cemetery by Mrs. S. A. Perkins. Cedar Waxwings have been quite common at various points including the Fontenelle Forest. A flock of Bluebirds was observed by Mrs. Perkins in Forest Lawn Cemetery. Robins have become quite common and have been observed in flocks of 25 or more. Quite a number of Robins were observed feeding on berries of our multiflora rose hedges planted on our farm near Valparaiso in Saunders County. The unusual

number of Robins most likely is due to our having the mildest December temperatures since 1931, and January which began with below normal temperatures has up to this date accumulated an excess of 108° above normal.

"I am enclosing a clipping regarding the death of Mrs. Floyd Clarke. Mrs. Clarke was a good local birder and was a member of N.O.U. for a number of years. (The clipping states that Mrs. Clarke was 76 and died at Crosby, Texas.) Her husband, Dr. Floyd S. Clarke died October 21, and she died only a few weeks later."—*L. O. Horsky, Omaha*

"One of our Audubon Naturalists' Club members, Miss Edna Thompson, reports that there was a Mockingbird in her yard until January 10, 1958, after which time it was seen no more."—*Mrs. Mary Lou Pritchard, Lincoln*

"As of this date (February 5, 1958) I have fed 100 pounds each of sunflower seed, milo and cracked corn as well as 50 pounds of suet. Regular callers since January 1 are: Cardinals (6-8), Blue Jays (3-5), Starlings (10-30), Downy Woodpeckers (2-3), Hairy Woodpeckers (2), Flicker (1), House Sparrows (50-100), Chickadees (2-4), Red-breasted Nuthatch (1-3), Slate-colored Junco (2-3), Crow (1), Common Grackle (1-3), and on January 16, 30 to 35 Cowbirds visited the station and have been regular visitors every day since. I believe my station is the only thing that keeps them alive. The majority of them are males."—*L. H. Watson, Lincoln*

"Jack was parking his truck when he saw a shrike on a fence back of the Co-op store. It dived down amongst some weeds and came up

with a sparrow and flew away with it.

"Maud (Witschy) has reported a large flock of Redpolls which were with Pine Siskins near Lake Alice last Sunday (February 2, 1958)."

—Mrs. Jack (Joyce) Brashear, Scottsbluff

"Probably the most exciting (bird) has been the Redpolls—most unusual for this area. We saw them first on January 10 in Havelock Cemetery and have seen them regularly each week end since (dated January 27). The flock numbered between 50 and 75 individuals. White-winged Crossbills were seen on January 1 in that locality and we saw them again January 25 at Wyuka Cemetery. This is a first for the Lincoln area. We have had an unusual number of Red-breasted Nuthatches and many flocks of Cedar Waxwings. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is spending the winter here in this area."—Mrs. Harold Whitmus, Lincoln

(A flock of over 100 Redpolls were seen at Chadron February 24, 1958,

and had been reported earlier by Don Wirt and George Blinco. —Doris Gates)

"It has been our custom to take a survey of the birds in this vicinity on the first day of the New Year. We covered the City Park, Crystal Springs Park and the country road west of Fairbury. We observed the following: Cardinal, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Robin, Starling, Song Sparrow, Meadowlark, Tree Sparrow, Slate-colored Junco, Pheasant, Mockingbird, Harris's Sparrow, Downy Woodpecker, Chickadee, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Cedar Waxwings, and Mourning Dove. We hope you may mention these in *The Nebraska Bird Review*."—Pete Junker, Mrs. Rose Junker, and Miss Susie Callaway, Fairbury

"I saw a Summer Tanager here April 19, 1957. This is the only record of one being here and I think the only one in this part of the state." —Carl E. Smith, Halsey

## NEBRASKA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1957

		Total
Jan. 1, 1957 Balance in general fund	\$360.43	\$422.43
Life membership fund	62.00	
Receipts during year		
Active memberships 209	\$627.00	
Sustaining members 34	170.00	
Subscriptions 35	120.25	
Allowance for cashing check	.05	
Sale of Reviews	3.00	
Sale of checklists	9.13	
Interest on bonds	7.50	
Surplus from state meeting	15.00	
Library fund returned to general fund	53.53	
	Income 1005.46	1427.89

<b>Expenditures</b>		
Graham Printing Service		
<i>Bird Review</i> , Jan. '57	102.28	
<i>Bird Review</i> , Apr. '57	92.52	
<i>Bird Review</i> , July '57	93.73	
<i>Bird Review</i> , Oct. '57	171.47	
Membership cards	23.31	
Labels	12.00	
Addressing NOU News	7.50	502.81
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Doris Gates, editor	88.40	
NOU news, postage, telephone, mileage for executive board		
Willeta Lueshen, secretary		
Programs for annual meeting	25.85	
Postage, telephone, mileage	43.50	
E. Ritchey, treasurer	11.00	
Postage	6.00	
Surety bond	5.00	
Henry Baumgarten, pres.	3.00	
Mileage to board meeting		
W. E. Eigsti	10.44	
Publicity for annual meeting		
Quiz Engraving Service	4.87	
Hastings Letter Shop, notice cards	12.00	
Dave Jamieson, stationery	78.00	
Hanson Bennett, refund	.50	
Ticket for banquet speaker	1.75	
Bank service charge	4.31	
Pay As You Go check book	1.50	285.12
<hr/>		
	Total	787.93
January 1, 1958 Balance on hand	639.96	1427.87

**Investments**

Two G Bonds, maturity value \$200, cost \$100 each  
 Three J Bonds, maturity value \$300, cost \$72 each

**BEHAVIOR NOTES**

April 13, 1957, two Killdeer were observed in the mud at the edge of a sandhill pond in Sheridan County. While walking, each individual would stop and "feel" with its feet, using a shaking motion in the mud. Then, with its bill, it proceeded to pick up something from one side of its feet. One bird gave a prolonged call—not its typical "killdeer" call.

At approximately 4:00 P.M. on April 21, 1957, two Wilson's Phalaropes were observed in what was presumably mating activity on the shore of a sandhill pond in Sheridan County. Afterwards the pair waded into the water.

May 26, 1957, in the Alliance City Park a Yellow Warbler chased a Blackpoll Warbler from a bush—perhaps territorial behavior.—*John and Ann Mathisen, Alliance*



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Janet L. C. Rapp

R. Alyn Moser

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**SECOND ANNUAL WINTER CONVENTION  
of the  
NEBRASKA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**

January 11, 1958, a meeting was held at the Omaha Y.M.C.A. Members numbered 35 and guests, 18 for a total of 53. They came from Hastings, Wisner, Kearney, Peru, Lyons, Plattsmouth and Chadron as well as Lincoln and Omaha.

The president, Dr. John C. W. Bliese, presided over the program which was as follows: "Headaches of an Editor," Doris Gates of Chadron; "Progress Toward Mission 66," H. Raymond Gregg of the National Parks Service, Omaha; "Bird Bones and Human Homologies," Jim Tatum, student at the Nebraska State Teachers College, Kearney; "King Solomon's Ring," (book by Lorenz) Fred Karre, also a student at Kearney; "Let's Look for Birds

in Nebraska," William F. Rapp, Jr., of Crete. Harold V. Whitmus, president of the Audubon Naturalists' Club of Lincoln, announced plans for the annual meeting of N.O.U. to be held in Lincoln May 10-11, 1958. William Haggen had an interesting display of photographs and other pictures by Don Bleitz.

After the meeting, the group adjourned to a nearby restaurant and later to Joslyn Memorial to attend a lecture by Albert Wool of the National Audubon Society. These lectures are sponsored by the Omaha Concord Club.

The committee for this winter meeting included Mrs. John Lueshen and L. O. Horsky.